

K-61

Bordley-Usilton House  
High Street, Chestertown  
c. 1770

As a resident of Kent County, Dr. William Bordley was an active individual. A member of Chester Parish, he was on the commission empowered to erect a chapel of ease in Chestertown and later occupied Pew No. 8 there. Bordley also purchased 1/4 of Pew No. 2 at I. U. <sup>1</sup> Involved in the revolutionary cause, Dr. Bordley is mentioned in several correspondences and other war records. After the Revolution and only a year before his death, he subscribed @18 toward the establishment of Washington College.<sup>2</sup>

In 1770, "William Bordley of Chestertown, Doctor of Physic" purchased 1/2 of lot No. 57 from John Monk, son and heir of Henry Monk. Described in the deed as "land on which Henry Monk formerly did dwell." The @25 purchase price certainly does not point to a very substantial dwelling – at least on this half of the lot.<sup>3</sup> The other half was purchased by William McKenny. In 1772, Bordley and McKenny joined in a deed of partition, since both had purchased an undivided 1/2 interest in the lot originally.<sup>4</sup> There is no mention of a dwelling in this deed. However, by the time of Bordley's will in 1784, a house described as being on the lot is bequeathed to his daughter Sarah.<sup>5</sup>

The house was a large scale, 3 bay, two story townhouse with entrance to one side. Its facade alone was laid in Flemish bond and just beneath the first floor windows there was an ovolo molded water table. At least part, if not all of the steps to the front door were limestone.

The plan of the house consisted of four rooms, one being the entry-stairhall. The other three were of varying sizes and each had its own fireplace. The plan was similar to Piney Grove and Hepbron's Choice, two houses of Kent County which appear to have been built in the 1770's.

The house remained in the ownership of Dr. Bordley's descendants until 1834, when it was sold to Thomas E. Dugan, who with his sons Joseph and Thomas, owned several properties in the 400 and 500 blocks of High Street. The 1841 Tax Assessment in fact show the Dugans as owners of fourteen properties valued at \$4820.00. The Bordley House, at that time, was appraised at only \$600 and is listed as "occupied by Charles Davis,"<sup>6</sup> who "lived there for more than 26 years."<sup>7</sup> Later, in the 1860 Atlas, the house is listed as being the residence of Joseph Dugan.

In 1868 the house was purchased by William B. Usilton.<sup>8</sup> The son of Robert and Mary Lamb Usilton, he began working for the Kent News at an early age. By 1861 he and James H. Plummer had purchased the business. They continued to publish the newspaper together until Plummer's death. Continuing with his sons Fred and Wm. B. Usilton, Jr., Mr. Usilton ran the paper into the 20th Century.<sup>9</sup> (pe)

As a successful newspaper man, Mr. Usilton and his wife Mary Frazier Usilton were able to and did undertake a major remodeling of the house in the late 1860's. The High Street facade received a bold front porch with bracketed cornice to match the main cornice of the house. The entrance was removed to create a vestibule and the whole trimmed with an architrave with the same details as the porch. On the southeast gable a

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large bay window appeared and two windows were bricked in. Inside, the floor plan was changed in the same manner as Hepbron's Choice, with a stairhall extending through the entire brick section and two rooms on the southeast side. In order to bring it up to date, a new kitchen wing was constructed out the back, the basic plan appearing in the 1877 Atlas.

The Usiltens retained ownership of the house until 1942. Since that time it has had four owners and remains a private residence.

1. Chester Parish Vestry Minutes, 1766-1919.
2. Barroll, L. Wethered, Washington College, 1783  
MD Hist Mag. p. 168.
3. Land Records, Lib. DD 3, fol 355.
4. Land Records, Lib. DO 4, fol. 17.
5. Wills, Lib. 7, fol. 169.
6. 1841 Tax Assessment
7. Usilton, Fred F. History of Chestertown, 1899, p. 81.
8. Land Records, Lib. JKH 7, fol. 14.
9. Portrait & Biographical Record, Chapman Publishing Co., 1898, p. 749.

~~K 72~~ 414 High Street  
Chestertown  
private residence

414 High Street seems to built by the Bordley family of Chester-town, who were no doubt related to the famous John Beale Bordley of Wye Island.

Even with its Victorian embellishments one can see a much earlier townhouse, of large size and good proportions. It is an excellent candidate for a restoration. The High Street facade water table and Flemish bond brickwork, now painted yellow, and the large chimney within the east gable contribute to an attractive 2½ story home.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

"Yellow Brick"

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

414 High St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Md.

COUNTY

Kent

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Ellen L. Meredith

Telephone #: 778-2939

STREET &amp; NUMBER

414 High St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Md. 21620

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of The Clerk

Liber #: EHP 14

Folio #: 31

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Kent County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Md.

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

none known

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

414 High St., now painted yellow, was remodelled between 1868 and 1900, when owned by Wm. B. Usilton. The additions include a heavier Victorian bargeboard which overlaps the east gable casement windows, a Victorian cornice with scroll on the High St. facade, an altered and recessed doorway up 3 steps from the porch, & a full width 1 story porch. On the east facade one bay has been built out from the house and is painted white wood.

The High Street facade is in Flemish bond with a water table up to the level of the 1st floor windows. The house is on a high brick foundation with no doubt a good sized basement beneath. It is 3 bays wide with 3 modern double hung shuttered windows on the 2nd floor, and the doorway and 2 modern double hung shuttered windows on the first. An entablature with possibly added Victorian decorations surrounds the entrance. Two pedimented dormers project from the composition shingle roof and are 8/8 double hung.

The east facade is in American bond and is 3 bays. Two casement windows are at the gable top, 2 modern double hung windows, with a middle one bricked up, on the 2nd floor, and 1 modern double hung, one bricked up, and the aforementioned added bay on the first floor. The large brick chimney is built within the wall.

The west gable is in American bond with 2 completely visible (the house is very close to its neighbor) casement windows at the top of the gable. The bargeboard on this east end is narrower and not as heavy as that on the west end. Possibly when the house was remodelled it was difficult, due to the close neighboring house, to reach the top of the gable and thus the bargeboard was left as originally designed. There is evidence of 2 windows being bricked over, 1 on each floor.

This house is reputed to have a lovely stairway in the entrance hall.

By looking very carefully at the High St. facade at the level of the front porch floor one can see two rows of cantilevered bricks which would no doubt indicate cellar windows under the porch.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES before 1784

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

414 High Street, even with its Victorian embellishments, can be seen to be a much earlier townhouse, again not as pretentious as those on Water St. but yet one of large size and good proportions. Restored to its original appearance it would be a real addition to the Historic District of Chestertown.

The Bordley family, who seem to be the first or among the first owners, are no doubt related to John Beale Bordley of Wye Island fame.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fred G. Usilton History of Kent County

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CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.162 acres more or less

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

beginning N side of High St. at SE corner W.E.Greenwood lands - being S 46° 02' E - 91.33 ft. from easterly side Kent St. and running by and with Greenwood land N 42° 58' east 9.97 ft. to SW corner ~~2~~ <sup>corner</sup> 2 story brick dwelling, then N 44° 59' E - 118.65 ft. to iron pipe (sw corner Martin lands), then S 46° 02' E - 41.07 Ft. to iron pipe. Then S 43° 31' W - 165.19 ft. to point on N

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES  
side of High St. With that side N 46 02' w - 43.66 Ft. to beginning.

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen B. White, Historic Site Surveyor

Sept. 1976

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust, City of Chestertown

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

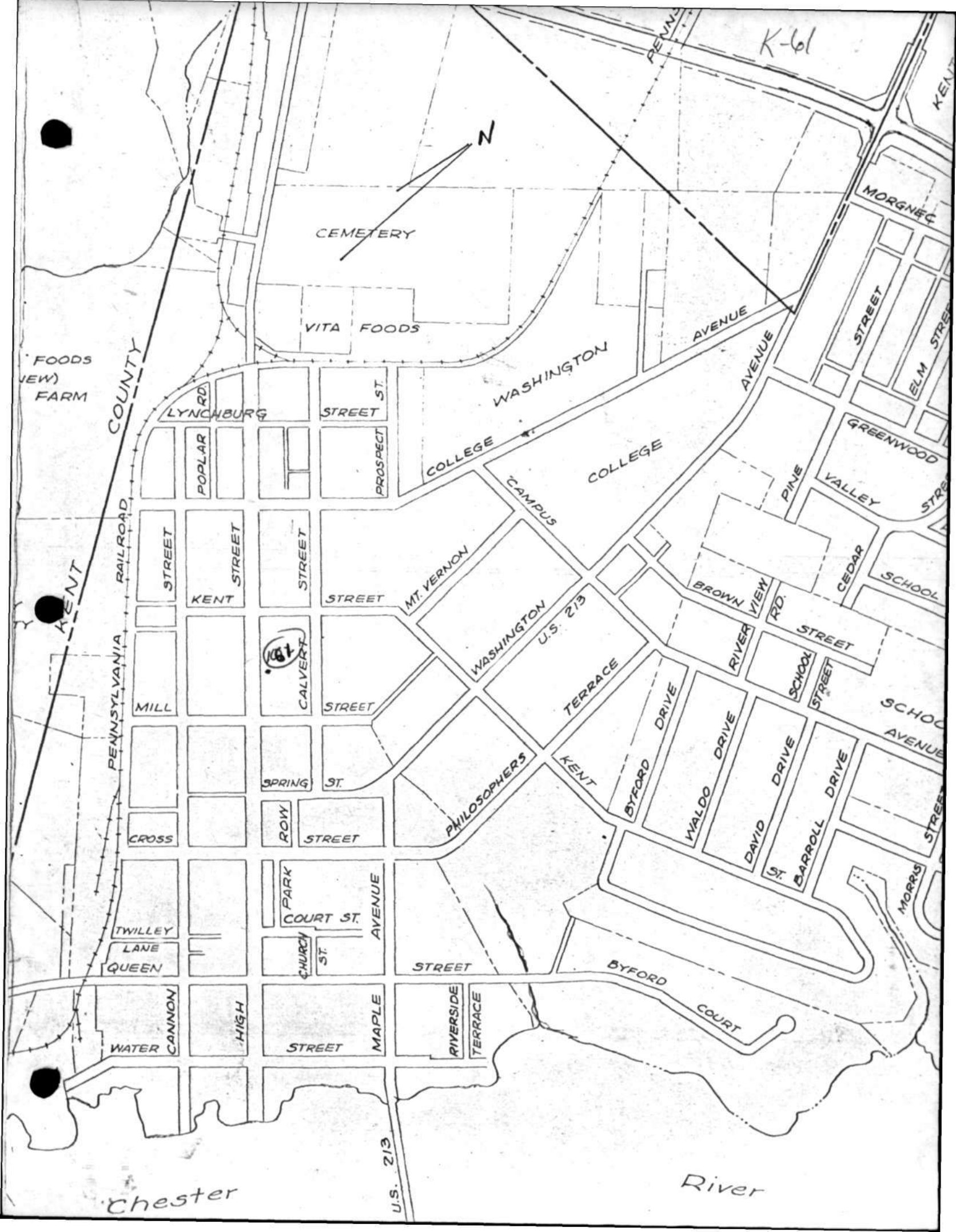
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

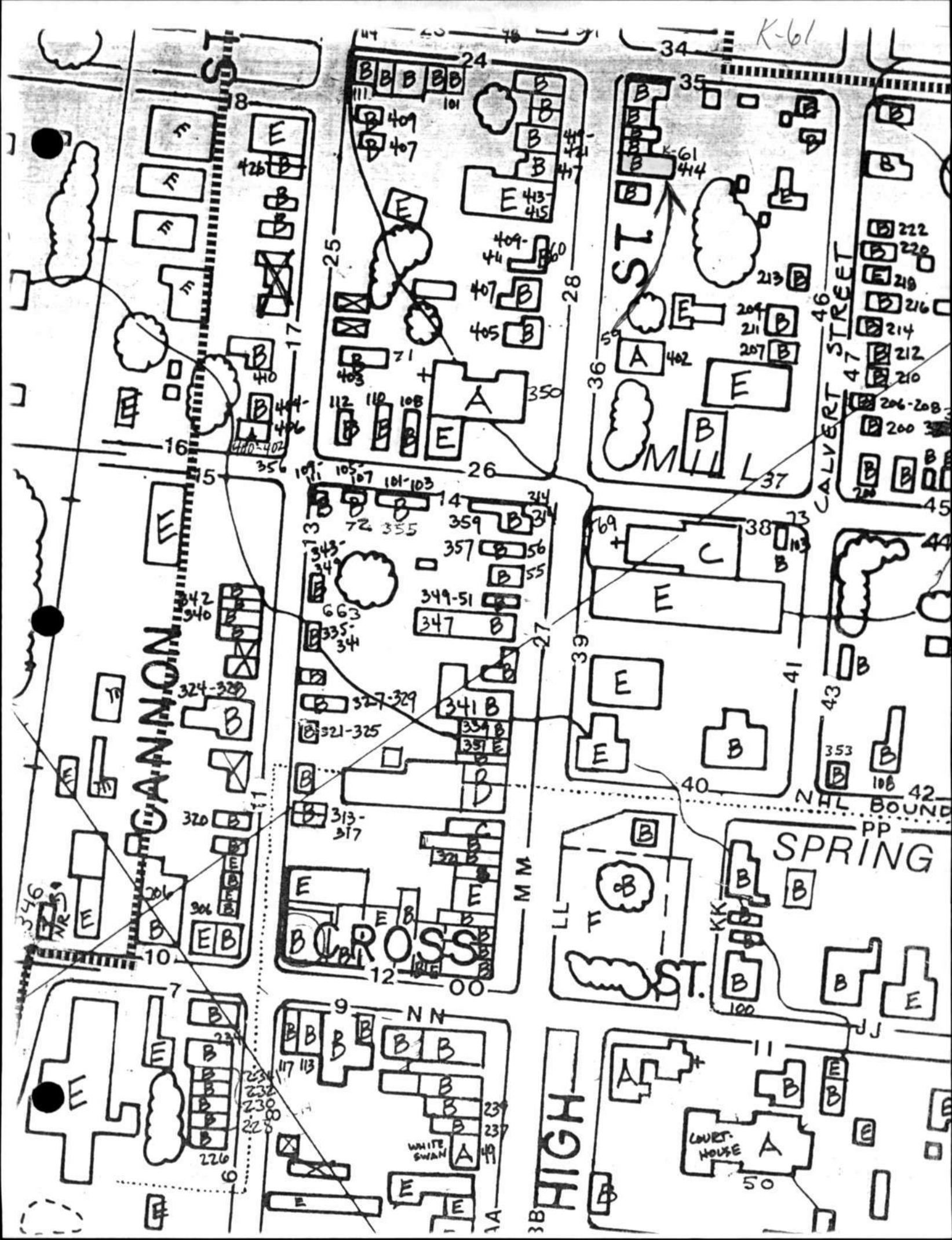
The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



EHP 14/31	9/10/65	Janice G. Owen and Eileen A. Loudermilk, jt. ten. and Donald L. Meredith who joins to convey his dower interest, to Ellen L. Meredith.
EHP 14/28	9/10/65	Donald and Ellen Meredith to Janice Owens and Eileen Loudermilk.
WHG 52/617	12/14/57	Albert H. Liebermann and Eula B. to Donald and Ellen Meredith.
WHG 42/44	10/26/55	Ruth N. Wilson, widow, and Clarence T. and Thelma L. Wilson to Albert H. & Eula B. Liebermann.
RAS 29/393	5/28/42	Frederick G. and Addie B. Usilton, Wm. B. Jr. & Hannah M. Usilton, M. Earl and Florence Usilton, Clara B. Carey (nee Usilton) and J. Franklin Carey, P. Ralph McFeely & wife, Wm. C. McFeely & wife, to Clarence T. and Thelma L. Wilson, and Myrtle V. Wilson. (?-mother of Ruth N.)
JTD 3/498	7/1/00	Wm. B. Usilton to Mary F. Usilton, wife. Mary died intestate on 2/25/33 so the land went to the children, Frederick G., M. Earl, Wm. B. Jr., & Clara, and 2 grandchildren, Wm. C. and P. Ralph McFeely.
During this period William B. Usilton remodelled the house costing about \$10,000. (p. 81 Fred G. Usilton, <u>History of Kent County.</u> )		
JKH 7/14	3/17/68	Joseph and Margaret Hampson to Wm. B. Usilton.
JKH 6/408	8/13/67	James A. Burton and Mary A., to Joseph Hampson, \$1,300.00.
JKH 2/556	8/1/61	Joseph O. Dugan & Virginia A., to James A. Burton, \$650.00.
JNG 3/442	6/1/34	David J. McKim and Mary (nee Hawkins) to Thomas E. Dugan (father of Joseph). \$300.00.
Will 9/254	6/15/06	of Matthew Hawkins to his daughter, Mary Hawkins
WS 3/526	1/1/22	here John Hawkins, son of Matthews, deeds property to Mary as she has reached age of 21. "all that house and lot or part of a lot of ground in Chester Town which was devised by Dr. Wm. Bordley, deceased, to his Daughter Sarah (late the wife of Matthew Hawkins, father of the grantor herein named.)"
Will 7/69	8/1/84	of William Bordley to Sarah Bordley. "... give and bequeath unto my daughter Sarah Bordley my house and lot in Chester Town."
?		
L.1/645	6/1/1750	James Monk, mariner, to David Crane, Inn holder, £5 current money, all his $\frac{1}{4}$ lot #57, all bldgs. on it.
Will 2/18	3/24/1734	of Henry Monk, house and lot #47 (error?) to wife, Honour for her life, then to sons Henry, James, John and grandson, William, and houses.
L.4/39	8/28/1730	Simon & Dorcas Wilmer to Henry Monk, Planter, £10 current money, lot #57.





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Bordley-Usilton House (Yellow Brick House)  
414 High Street  
Chestertown  
Chestertown Quad.  
Kent County







K GR Usilton House  
414 High

1/77 S



KOR Weilton House  
414 High

1/77 S + E





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MH7 Vertical File

Kent co. Chestertown 416,414,412 High St.

James M. Kilvington April, 1975 from W.